

A
74 pages
7.
TRUE AND SURPRISING ACCOUNT

OF A

Natural Sleep-Walker.

*Read before the Philosophical Society of Lausanne in
Switzerland, on the 6th of February 1788.*

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED FOR PETER HILL,
1792.

Advertisement.



THE translator, who has the happiness to reckon among his acquaintance some of the members of the Society of Lausanne, can safely vouch for the authenticity of the following little tract. But as no man is bound to credit anonymous assertions, he begs leave to acquaint the public, that a copy of the original is left with the publisher, for the inspection of the learned or the sceptical.

He has studied fidelity of version and perspicuity, more than elegance or rotundity of phrase. He neither opposes nor defends the hypothetical reasoning of the reporters. His wish must ever be, to disseminate fact, and to leave every man, unbiassed and unwarped, to frame his own theories, and build his own systems.

N. B. The notes of the reporter are marked by the letters of the alphabet.

AN
ACCOUNT
OF A
Natural Sleep-Walker.

DOCTOR LEVADE having communicated some interesting particulars concerning a natural Sleep-walker *, residing at Vevey, in the house of Mr Tardent, school-master there, the Society, eager to collect some distinct facts upon such a singular subject, commissioned three of its members, namely, Dr Levade, and Messrs. Reynier and Van Berchem *jun.* to make and report their observations. These three gentlemen, accordingly, gave in the following memoir.

A AGREEMENT

* Is not this more correct than *Night-walker*, which is ambiguous?

AGREEABLY to the intentions of the Society, we went to Vevey on the nineteenth of January 1788. M. Tardent, who had been apprized of our errand, was kindly anxious to facilitate our observations.

Plan of our Observations.

THE object of the Society being not merely to examine the various actions of the sleep-walker, but also to catch the general features of his affection, and so attain to more exact ideas of such a state of the human frame ; we purposelly avoid noting each fact in the order of time. For were we to be guided solely by the series of appearances produced by a heated and raving fancy, our account would necessarily present an incongruous group, irksome in detail, and fitted, perhaps to *excite*, but by no means to *gratify*, the curiosity of enquirers. Hence we have been induced to range each fact under one or other of our observations. And, as the patient's waking state, his sleep previous to the fit, his coming out of it, the state of his sences during it, the use he makes of them, and the impressions which he receives

receives from external objects, have been the chief points of our examination, as well as those on which the facts have thrown any light, we mean to class the facts themselves under these several articles. We shall next offer some general reflections on the phenomenon of sleep-walking. And, lastly, as the affection superinduced by animal magnetism, has attracted the investigations, nay, the surprize and astonishment of many, we have thought proper to compare it with natural *Somnambulism**, and shew that they are one and the same affection.

SUCH a plan obviously called for great variety of observation and experiment. But the infrequency of young Devaud's fits precluded a regular and continued attention. Still we flatter ourselves, that we have, in part, fulfilled the views of the Society. To render our relation more complete, we have, to the facts which we jointly witnessed, added those observed by Dr Levade himself, and imparted by him to the Society. We have likewise

* I borrow this word from the French, to prevent the constant recurrence of *sleep-walking*.

availed ourselves of the relation of a gentleman of respectability, (Mons. N——) who noted, with scrupulous accuracy, every thing that passed under his own eyes on the 23d Dec. 1787, during one of the young man's most interesting paroxysms.

Difficulties attending Observations of this sort.

If the naturalist, in surveying the objects of nature—if the chemist, when he works upon brute inanimate matter, ought constantly to guard against that spirit of system, which often makes us see things more in the state we *wish* to see them, than in that in which they really exist—how much more ought *he*, who purposes to observe the workings of imagination, as they affect the movements and actions of a living agent, and whose researches are connected with phenomena which favour of the marvellous, to distrust his observations and what may seem to fall under them?—His way lies between truth and error, in the foot-path of illusion. As, in the case before us, the most surprising facts and appearances may result from circumstances purely

purely incidental, he should frequently repeat the same experiments, and with the minutest accuracy. This close attention is especially requisite in a train of observations which are submitted to many spectators. A casual word or gesture, we have remarked, has given very different results to the same experiment, sensibly influenced the actions of the sleep-walker, and hood-winked the eyes of the observer.

IN thus stating our difficulties, we presume not to have surmounted them ; but, on the contrary, crave the Society's indulgence to the imperfections of our report. We also flatter ourselves, that these hints may be of some service to the curious, who may be inclined to prosecute enquiries of a similar nature.

Devaud, a real Sleep-walker.

THE age in which we live is so addicted to quackery, that the general mind has become the dupe of imposition. The learned and enlightened, no less than the vulgar ignorant,

have

have been misled and deceived. We have seen sleep-walkers assume the powers of prophecy, and, under cover of a doctoral bonnet, deal out their drugs, at random, to patients credulous enough to swallow them. One may certainly, then, be allowed to ask, whether, in the present case, the whole be not a tissue of delusion, and the trick of art? Nor can the Society be surprised to find us ascertain, in the outset, the genuineness of Devaud's sleep-walking; since, once convinced of the young man's honesty, it will listen to the sequel in the repose of confidence.

THIS boy, who is only thirteen years and six months old, has happily painted on his face the expression of frank and honest dispositions. Though by no means destitute of understanding or talents, he has made very little proficiency in his studies: and his sphere of information is extremely limited. One so young and artless, could never act, for any length of time, the difficult character of a sleep-walker, in the midst of a number of persons, who examine him with the nicest attention: nor could he stand the test of the various experiments

ments mentioned in this report, without detection. Besides, simple and timid in his waking hours, he betrays not in the most distant manner, the least symptom of that love of parade and consequence, which stamps the quack, nor of that dissimulation and effrontery, which are so necessary to make deceit pass current. Add to this, that neither interest, nor vanity, which has produced many a sleep-walker, can operate here. For he gains not a farthing ; and the passion of self love is not likely to be gratified at the silent hours of three and four o'clock morning, when the few, whom curiosity attracts, can add nothing to his importance. In short, his troubled sleep, his convulsive motions, and the nausea produced by the loadstone, are not, and cannot be, the coinage of art. The above arguments derive additional force from the consideration, that M. Tardent is advanced in years, that his integrity is unimpeached, and that he is under no worldly temptation to lose his fair name, or to bear with the expence, the embarrassment, and the trouble of keeping the young man in his house.

The Sleep-walker's Constitution.

DEVAUD, though apparently stout and hale, betrays unequivocal symptoms of a weakly constitution, and extreme irritability of nerves. His sense of smell, taste and touch, is most exquisite : and, not unfrequently, he takes immoderate and involuntary fits of laughing or crying, without being able to alledge a reason.

Number and Duration of the Fits.

THE affection does not return every night: nay, several weeks will sometimes elapse, without his being at all troubled with it. Some pretend that it is regularly periodical; but their opinion is by no means confirmed. In the course of a few days, he is usually affected every other night. The longest fits last three or four hours, and never seize him before three or four o'clock morning.

WHILE we were at Vevey, the young man's father, who practises medicine, gave him a powder

powder in wine, which brought on a quiet sleep, and seems to have suspended the paroxysms. But we have not seen him since (a.)

Prolongation of the Affection.

ONE may protract, or even bring on the disorder, by slightly passing the finger, or feathers of a quill, over the upper lip. We have frequently lengthened it out, and excited it in this way, at the moment every thing seemed to indicate his awaking. M. N—, too, has marked in his account, that the patient having fallen asleep on a stair, they applied a feather to his lip; whereupon he got up, ran down stairs, and resumed his wonted activity. M. N— saw the experiment repeated several times.

THE night preceding the fit, the patient feels drowsy after supper, and is apt to complain of a great heaviness of the eye-lids.

B

His

(a) M. Tardent informs us, that his young guest had a return of his disease on the 31st January.

His Sleep.

HIS sleep, which is never uniformly tranquil, is more disturbed than usual, when he falls into a fit. Being called to him, when he was in this last situation, we found him still asleep, though involuntary motions, starts and palpitations, exactly similar to those which affect one falling into the magnetic sleep, convulsed his frame. He faltered, now sat up, and then lay down again. He soon articulated more distinctly, rose abruptly, and acted agreeably to the dream of the moment. In the midst of his sleep, he is sometimes tossed by continued and nervous motions, and rattles for a long while with his fingers on the bedstead or the wall, with the rapid clack of a hand-mill.

His Waking.

THE passing from a fit to his waking state, is always preceded by one or two minutes of calm sleep, during which he snores. He then awakes, rubbing his eyes, like one who has enjoyed a pleasant and comfortable nap.

THERE

THERE is danger in awaking him during the fit. When roused suddenly, he has sometimes fallen into convulsions; and he has requested that none would stir him, when in the state of sleep-walking. Though we were not ocular witnesses of the following fact, we can rely on its authenticity.

HE rose, one night, to eat grapes, went out of the house, crossed the town, and entered a vineyard, where he fancied he made a hearty repast. Several persons followed him at a convenient distance. But one imprudently whistled so loud, as to awake him; and the poor boy fell senseless on the ground. He was immediately carried home. On coming out of the swoon, he recollects perfectly well his being awakened in the vineyard, but retained no distinct impression, except that of his fright produced by finding himself alone in the open air, and which had operated so violently on his frame, as to deprive him of his senses.

State of the Sleep-walker after the Fit.

AFTER the fit, he commonly feels somewhat fatigued; sometimes, too, though not often, a slight disposition to heart-ach. One of the paroxysms, which we witnessed, was followed by copious vomitings. But it is not long before he recovers perfectly.

AT first, he expressed much surprise, on waking, to find himself dressed, and surrounded by different persons: but now, that custom has rendered all this familiar, he retains only his natural bashfulness and embarrassment, which his physiognomy and actions strongly paint.

THE recollection of what passes in his mind during the affection, vanishes with his sleep. Yet we find one, and only one exception, to this remark. A companion, whom he dearly loved, had been present to his fancy in the act of drowning, and he immediately stretched out his leg for his expiring friend to take hold of. On getting up, he recalled distinctly

distinctly the circumstances of the dream. During his somnambulism, he is conscious of the occurrences of a former fit. Thus, on shewing him a watch with a concealed movement, *remove that cap*, said he, *and you will see the wheels*: a piece of information which he had picked up in the course of a preceding fit.

Subjects of his Dreams.

THE ideas of a boy, whose education embraces few objects, must necessarily be confined within a narrow circle. His dreams, of consequence, can be little varied. His daily versions, cyphering, the church, spires, and bells; and, above all, tales of ghosts and hobgoblins, with which, it seems, they had storied his infant brain, are, with a few exceptions, the themes of his nightly visions.

To direct his somnambulism to any particular subject, it suffices to strike his imagination with some story the night before. During one of his fits, we read to him the history of a robber; and immediately he fancied

cied that he saw robbers in his room. But, as he is apt at any rate to dream that he is surrounded by a whole band of them, we could not be positively certain that the story had raised such phantoms (b.) His dreams are, for the most part, of an unpleasant or melancholy nature: he fancies he is teased or persecuted, often weeps bitterly, and complains of pains, which he imagines really exist. The least excess at supper gives a deeper tinge of melancholy to his dreams.

Effects of certain Agents.

As it seemed of importance to ascertain the effects of the electric and magnetic fluids during

(b) This facility of suggesting dreams, reminds us of the following anecdote. Some country folks having assembled to make merry at an alehouse, one of them nodded over, with his elbow resting on the table. Another of the party wagered that he would make him dream that he was on the point of drowning. Accordingly, he whispered softly in his ear, *you drown*. He repeated the same words several times, always raising his tone of voice. The sleeper soon began to toss about, and discover signs of inquietude; and, as the alarm became louder, sought to save himself by swimming.

ing the affection, and in the sleep immediately preceding it, we had recourse to these agents: but, that the boy might receive no hurtful impressions, employed them very sparingly at first.

AN application of a small magnetized bar under the nose, uniformly encreased the muscular motions of his body and limbs, and occasioned a shaking of the head, as if something fretted him. The same effects followed, when we approached the bar to his eyes, or other parts of the body. When it was applied to the pit of the stomach, he felt a painful sensation, which he expressed by saying, *I know not what they would do with me, but methinks they would pierce me through the body.*

MORE powerful magnets produced more marked effects. A loadstone, which carries 18 ounces, held near the soles of the feet, when the patient lay in bed, caused him start up, and increased the muscular spasms. Another, which carries five pounds, at the distance of a foot, so redoubled his starting and uneasiness,

uneasiness, that he insisted they had put him to the rack. The same magnet acted at three feet.

A small Leyden-phial, lightly electrified, and a stick of sealing-wax, produced similar, but weaker, effects.

As these experiments were repeated several times, and on different parts of the body, we cannot question the action of magnetism and electricity.

IT is needless to mention, that the above experiments were made, without the patient having received any previous hint about our intentions; and even at times, when his mind was busied with objects of a very different nature.—Those performed with the loadstone, were repeated when he was awake, but made no sensible impression.

IF magnetized without his knowledge, even by his bed-fellow, provided no contact took place, he gave no evidence of being particularly or sensibly affected. But when they told

told him he was to be magnetized, he was much alarmed, and escaped into another room, nor could be prevailed on to come out, till assured that they would not meddle with him. It is proper to mark, that, when awake, he dreads magnetism very much, from the idea that it would hurt him, were he to submit to it.

State of his Senses.

THE most *interesting*, but at the same time the *nicest* part of our enquiry, consists in the most scrupulous examination of facts, and the strictest attention to every the most trivial circumstance, which can throw any light upon the state of his senses during sleep-walking, the manner in which they receive impressions from foreign objects, and the use he makes of them.

Sense of Smell.

IRON, brass, and silver, applied to the nostrils, made no impression. A bit of cedar wood caused

caused uneasiness ; as did the fingers, either from their smell or perspiration.

First Fact. IN one of his paroxysms, they gave him a slice of loaf, and a little wormwood wine. He distinguished the latter by the smell, and said, *This is not our table wine.*

Sense of Taste.

THERE are instances of sleep-walkers exercising this sense in great perfection.

2d Fact. WHEN he remained in a state of languid apathy, we presented him with a little wine. He drank it off readily ; but the irritation it occasioned gave much vivacity to his conversation, his motions and his actions, and writhed his face into involuntary contortions.

Sense of Touch.

3d Fact. WHEN we stood in his way, as he walked along, wrapt up in some dream, he passed

passed on betwixt two of us, without appearing any how offended, or even without being conscious (it seemed) of the presence of any obstacle.

4th Fact. WE can testify that he dressed himself in a room perfectly dark. His clothes lay on a great table: and when we jumbled them with other wearing apparel, he immediately discovered the trick, and complained grievously that his companions made sport of him. At last, by the help of a feeble ray, we saw him dress with great precision.

5th Fact. UNLESS much absorbed in some contemplation, he seldom fails to perceive when one teases him, pulls his hair, or pinches him in the gentlest manner. He aims a blow at the offender, as he thinks, and often chases him through the room, without interfering with chairs, tables, &c. or without being stopt or diverted by those who throw themselves in his way. But the tormentor whom he thus pursues, is the mere creature of his fancy.

6th Fact. HAVING snatched one of his books, whilst his eyes were perfectly shut, he said, without opening it, 'Tis a sorry Dictionary, as indeed it was.

7th Fact. WHEN we saw him, he had a cut finger, which pained him very much. As often as he happened to touch or strike the wound, he shook the finger and complained that it ached.

8th Fact. WITH his eyes fast locked, he touched in our presence several objects, and yet distinguished perfectly well those he had, from those he had not, seen before. Once, for example, we thrust into the drawer that contained his papers, a book which did not belong to him. He stumbled upon it by accident, and expressed great concern lest he should be suspected of theft.

ALL these facts seem to prove, that he employs his sense of touch with great justness upon objects which engage his imagination: or, to speak with more propriety, when his imagination allows him to employ it; for he

is sometimes insensible to what does not concern him. The sequel will furnish plenty of instances of the nicety of his touch.

Sense of Hearing.

9th Fact. ONCE, as we happened to be beside him, he rose with a fixed resolution to mount the spire of St. Martin's Church. All our intreaties to detain him were ineffectual; and, though they were enforced by persons whom he used to answer, he made no reply. He fancied himself actually in the church ringing the bell; nor deigned to answer a single question, till he had ended the operation. We then asked how long he had rung? He replied, *four minutes.*

10th Fact. HE seemed to pay no attention to a number of people, who happened to be in his room, and even disregarded their conversation, unless something particular drew his attention. Thus, when in his tranquil mood, as one knocked against a table, he called out, *who is there?* and was answered, *one of your school-fellows, who comes to prepare his lesson*

son with you. Not much relishing any propositions of study, he run to the door, and expelled, with admirable powers of action, not him who had made the reply, but the phantom of his importunate companion.

11th Fact. HAVING taken a candle with intent to light it, one of the company, not perceiving that he held it in his hand, remarked in a low voice, that *he had forgot his candle. Of what use are your eyes,* said Devaud, *if you don't see it?*

12th Fact. AFTER perambulating the streets at night, he directed his steps home-wards. But having passed the house by twelve or fifteen paces, and hearing one cry out, *he is mistaken,* he turned back to the door, and went in with great composure (c.)

13th Fact. As he was occupied with various reveries, a cuckoo-clock happened to strike. *So we have got cuckoos,* said he ; and when

(c) Taken from Mr N——'s relation.

when desired to imitate the note of that bird, did it accordingly.

14th Fact. THE shrill sounds of a clarinet affected him very sensibly, insomuch, that he sought to get out of the way, stopped his ears with his fingers, and shewed that they were hurt. At another time, he connected the sound of this instrument with the subject of his dream.

15th Fact. IN walking along a stone or wooden bridge, he was struck with the different noise of his steps, and, stamping with his foot, said, *there is a vault here.* (Mr. N—'s relation.)

16th Fact. IN one of his apparently unoccupied hours, they put different questions to him, which he answered very pointedly. But he replied more readily to those of his acquaintance than to strangers ; and when they addressed him in the second person singular*, than when they used the second person plural.

FROM

* The French express this by a one word, *tutoyer*. They employ the pronoun of the second person singular in speak-

FROM the above facts it appears, that the sleep-walker, for the most part, hears nothing but what has some reference to the dream which interests him, unless the sound or noise be extraordinary: and that, as long as his mind is fixed upon no particular object, he answers any queries that are proposed to him.

Sense of Sight.

As this makes one of the most important articles of our enquiry, let us trace young Devaud's actions, and see what they may suggest on the subject. But, for the sake of order, let us, in the first instance, point to those which shew what impression real external objects make upon his sense of sight; and then his visions, or the manner in which his imagination represents objects.

Impression

ing to children, near relations, very intimate friends, or when they would put a slight upon one who comes under neither of these denominations, and in their addresses to the Supreme Being.—What a monstrous jumble is here? —We may laugh at the *thouing* Quaker: but yet must grant that he speaks the language of simplicity, of grammar, and of common sense.

Impression of Objects upon his Sense of Sight.

17th Fact. WE have distinctly remarked, that when the sleep-walker would see any object, he makes an effort to open his eye-lids : but they remain so stiff, that with difficulty can he raise them a line or two by drawing up his eye-brows : the eye-ball then appears fixed, and the eye itself languid. Upon being presented with any thing, and desired to take it, we have constantly observed, that he opens his eyes a little with a considerable degree of exertion, and that he shuts them again as soon as he has grasped the object. The same remark occurred to Mr N——, who notes it in the following words : *When I accompanied the sleep-walker, I remained always behind him, or by his side : and very often, without touching him. I put my face under his, to observe if his eyes were really shut ; and I found them always closed. However, after walking some steps in this posture, he usually discovered me by the noise of my feet, and went a little aside. When I still followed him, he raised his head, drew up his eye-brows*

with difficulty, and made an effort to open his eyes. This he could do only by halves, yet so as to perceive me; DON'T STAND IN MY WAY, he said, and held on at the same pace. As the moon shone, I had an opportunity of examining his eyes very narrowly, and was convinced that the difficulty he experienced in opening them, proceeded from the inaction of the upper eye-lid, which he could not move without first raising the eye-brows. Mr. N—— has more than once verified this fact at candle-light, when the boy took any thing that was offered him (d.)

18th Fact. As he sat by a table near a lighted candle, we shewed him several watches, and asked if he knew them. He was at no loss to recognise those which he had seen when awake. We then asked what it was o'clock? and he answered very exactly, although the hands of the watches were purposely set at different hours. He opened his eyes a little each time, and shut them when he had seen the hour

(d) That the Society may the more confide in the truth of this observation, it may be proper to note, that we had marked it before we knew of Mr N——'s relation, a conformity which corroborates what has been asserted.

hour which the hand pointed to. But having ventured to answer twice or thrice, without opening them at all, he was obliged to submit to the usual trouble, in order to correct his mistakes.

19th Fact. DIVERS books were silently placed before him, without his taking any notice of them. But, on putting one into his hands that contained some plates, and begging he would examine them, he distinguished the subject of each, opening his eyes for an instant, in the way already described. If we put a paper over the plate, he nevertheless continued to *examine* it with his eyes shut, and explained the subject of it. This and the following fact prove, that the first impression, though rapid, was not feeble or transient.

20th Fact. HE said he would read a psalm, took his psalm-book, opened it, and pronounced the verses with his eyes quite shut. One of the company meanwhile covered the lines and book with a piece of landscape painting. He went on, however, as before, till they told him he certainly had a paper before him. He

then made the accustomed exertion to open his eyes ; and removed the paper, with a smile of surprize, remarking, that *it was a drawing.*—The same experiment repeated several times, always succeeded in the same way.

21st Fact. WHEN he meets any person in his walks, he keeps clear of him by opening his eyes. Though the person should be almost quite close to him, the sleep-walker never touches him : whence we would infer, that he is made conscious of one's presence by some other means than sight.

22d Fact. HE is more or less uneasy when several persons are in the room. Yet their presence seems to lay no restraint on his actions. He minds none but those who speak to him ; and only, as we have hinted, when he is inclined to see and hear them. When such of us as he had not seen before, accosted him, or offered him any thing, he answered or looked as the circumstances naturally suggested, but without regarding us in particular.

23d Fact.

23d Fact. HAVING occasion for a light, he took a candle, and lighted it in the kitchen, (which was in the story below his room) without perceiving that all the while there was a candle burning in his own room.

24th Fact. HAVING unintentionally approached so near a candle as to feel its heat, though plunged in a reverie, he asked *why they had brought a lamp there.*

FROM the above facts, we may infer, with respect to the sleep-walker's sense of sight, what has already been proved of his other senses; namely, that its functions are not suspended with regard to the objects he wishes to see, or, in other words, with regard to every perception of objects upon which his imagination is exercised: that one may determine him to receive impressions by his sense of sight, when his imagination is not busied upon other objects: that, in order to perceive, he must open his eyes a little; but that, the impression once received, is retained: that objects may strike his sense of sight, without striking his imagination, provided the latter
has

was no immediate interest in the objects themselves : finally, that he is sometimes apprized of the presence of objects, without being assisted by the sense of touch or sight.

His Visions.

25th Fact. WE have said that young Devaud got out of bed, to mount the tower of St Martin's church, and ring the bell. We were on the point of following him, as we imagined he would actually go to the spot. But hardly had he left his chamber, when he returned in the belief that he had reached the steeple, along with some of his companions, with whom he tattled incessantly. He proposed they should climb to the top ; and acted with his feet the motions of a person hastily ascending a stair. He reminded his companions of the several stages they had reached : here, would he observe, is the door of the clock-work ; there, such and such a window, &c.—courage, my boys, we are near the top. He turned several times in the direction of the supposed flights of stairs. Arrived at the belfrey, he proposed a ringing-match, observing, that

that he would not take the great bell in hand, as it had once swung him off his feet, but that he would try the little one. He fell to work accordingly, and played the beadle to perfection, imitating not only his manner of ringing, but also his efforts in stopping the bell's motion.

WITH a view to divert and draw his imagination to some other object, we requested one of the company to play on the clarinet in an adjoining room. Immediately on hearing the sound of the instrument, he associated it with the subject of his dream, and exclaimed, *What—I hear sorcerers below—quick—let us chase them.* In fact, he supposed himself running down stairs, and entering the church, whilst his every motion corresponded to such a supposition. It is worthy of remark, that as long as he fancied himself in the steeple or church, he had a precise regard to the real situation of place. *Well—my gentlemen sorcerers—what want you here?—oh yes!—I see it now—they are skeletons playing on the hautboy—Come, come, a packing with you.—Hence—a-vaunt.—I should lend them some good lounging kicks,*

kicks, added he to his companions, were it not that they are mere bones, and I should get hurt for my trouble. Yet he accomplishes their expulsion, by beheading some, and bruising others, always accompanying his discourse with the most expressive gestures, and presenting a spectacle truly singular.—Shortly after, he sees an old man ; and, affecting a broken utterance, thus accosts him, *Thou art old indeed!—thy hand trembles, but know that mine is steady.* He then menaced him, but suddenly restrained his passion with these words, *No—let him go there—he has a good countenance enough.*

WITHOUT following him in all the detail of this dream, it may suffice to mention, that he visited, still in his imagination, the church-yard, opened the graves, saw corpses and ghosts, &c. The following words particularly struck us.—*There are no ghosts—'tis all a tale—and yet I see them—a certain proof of their existence.—What more need be said.*

HE entreated the sorcerers to transport himself and companions to Mr Tardent's house.

house.—At once he moved in air. *Lord bless me! how high we are,* cried he, *I wish we had been more moderate in our desires.—See our school-steeple beneath there. They drop us on Mr. Tardent's roof.*—He then made a bounce, and, as if falling on his feet, said, *this is well—now we are safe—here's the garret door—let us in.* With this he stooped to pass the little door, which may actually be seen at the precise spot.

26th Fact. On another occasion, he believed there were robbers at his room-door. Accordingly, he watched and examined it very narrowly, though some persons purposely placed themselves between him and the wall. As he stepped forward, they made way, and saw him open the door, take the chimerical robber by the throat, kick him down stairs, and shut him out. We have seen him repeat this feat more than once.

FACTS might easily be multiplied, to prove, that his imagination presents objects in the same lively manner as if they were present: but those which we have just stated appear sufficient

cient for the purpose. Besides, to do justice to representations of this kind, every fact should be seen by him who relates it.—The boy's gestures are sometimes so comical, and his talk so outrè, as to amuse the observer, who is not checked by the melancholy, but very natural reflection, that the whole is the effect of disease.

Some of the Sleep-walker's most remarkable Actions in Light and Darkness.

27th Fact. His motions are uniformly regulated by his sensations, being slow or quick, lively or moderate, demure or precipitate, according to the impulse of the prevailing dream. He usually hangs down his head, and only raises it when he would contemplate some object. His steps are always very sure, nor is he at any loss to avoid obstacles. We have seen him, when he wished to get out of a room, remove a chair placed before the door, put it in its proper place, and then open the door, like a person awake.

28th Fact. HE walks the streets at night in perfect surety, and keeps clear of every thing that is likely to make him halt or stumble. Of this Mr. Levade was an ocular witness. Mr. N—— also relates, that Devaud went out by moon-light, to see his father at Servion, crossed the town and suburbs ; but (his imagination having suggested some bar to the future prosecution of his journey), turned back ; and, to the astonishment of the by-standers, distinctly avoided a parcel of sticks and stones, went over a heap of rubbish, and returned to it, to examine something which had struck him. When opposite to the door, he continued to tread on, till he was informed that he had gone too far. He then came back, and stept in without the least hesitation.

29th Fact. HE scaled the tower of St. Martin's, accompanied by Mr. Levade and others : and led the van with such precipitation, that the lantern, which served to light those who followed him, was of no use to himself. In coming down again, he stood before one of the holes through which the bell-ropes

pans, and advised his attendants to beware of them.

30th Fact. HAVING prevailed on him to write a version, we saw him light a candle, take pen, ink, and paper from his drawer, and then jot down what his master dictated. Though we put a piece of thick paper before his eyes, he continued to form each character with the same distinctness as before: only he seemed to feel uneasy, probably from the paper being placed too near his nose, and so preventing a free respiration.

31st Fact. THE following particulars, witnessed by Mr. Levade, are too remarkable to be passed in silence.

AT five o'clock, on the morning of the 21st December, our young sleep-walker rose from bed, took his writing materials and version-book, put his pen to the top of the page, but, observing some lines already traced, brought it down to the blank part of the leaf. The lesson began with these words, *funt ignavi pigrisia, ils deviennent ignorans par la paresse.* What

is very surprising, after writing several lines, he perceived that he had omitted an *s* in the word *ignorans*, and inserted two *r*'s in *paresse*: nor did he proceed further, till he corrected both these mistakes.

AT another time he wrote a copy, *to please his master*, as he said. It exhibited specimens of large and round text, and running hand, each done with its respective pen. He drew a castle in a corner of the paper: then called for a penknife, and erased a blot between two letters, without touching either of them. Mr. Levade, in short, has seen him cypher and calculate with great exactness. All these copies and calculations have been transmitted and presented to the Society, as vouchers of the facts. In each of the above operations, the sleep-walker had his eyes almost always shut, but there was a light in his room; whereas our observations had been most interesting in complete darkness. Yet, however desirous we might be to make experiments in the dark, the young man having no relapse while we were at Vevey, prevented us witnessing more than one or two facts. To these

we

we shall subjoin others, on the authenticity of which we can firmly rely.

32d Fact. WE have often heard him come down stairs, very hastily, when it was quite dark.

33d Fact. WE shewed him a book he had never seen before. He said he would examine it in day-light; and, retiring, with this intention, into a very dark kitchen, opened the book, declared that he saw the name of *Mr A—, de la porte au Vent*, and that the plates were beautiful. The book, in fact, belonged to that gentleman, but had no name upon it. We believe Devaud had heard it mentioned; and we are certain they told him that the book contained plates.

34th Fact. HE took from his press several of his own books, went to examine them in total darkness, cast up the title pages, and named each, without making a single mistake, as we verified by bringing them into the light, as soon as he named them. He has even told
the

the title of a book, when there was a thick plank placed between it and his eyes.

35th Fact. MR. TARDENT shewed us a specimen of his writing, which he assured us the sleep-walker had executed in the completest darkness.

36th Fact. LET the accurate observer, who witnessed the following fact, speak for himself. *The sleep-walker took a paper book from his drawer, opened it, and turned it up and down, till it almost touched his face. At the top of the first page he wrote, VEVEY LE—, then paused, as if to recollect the date, mumbled some words, which I could not understand, and, after another short interval, added with his pen, DECEMBRE 1787. He next called for an almanack, in place of which he was silently served with an * ETRENNE MIGNONNE. This he had no sooner opened,*

* I believe there are no two English words equivalent to these. They are the *voices signatae* for little gilt books, which are presented to young folks on the first day of the year. Besides a calendar, they usually contain *vaudevilles*, and other light effusions of the muses, which our graver almanacks disclaim.

ed, and put close to his face, than he threw it down on the table, declaring that it was an ETRENNE MIGNONNE. They then put into his hand an almanack in German, but which he had seen before, and which was of the same size and form as that of Vevey. There was a lighted candle on the table: yet he said, I CANNOT SEE HERE BEFORE MY NOSE---I'LL TAKE IT TO THE LIGHT. This LIGHT was the back of the stove (the furthest corner from the window), where, with his back to the light, and whilst several persons stood between him and the candle, he certainly could not see. He returned almost instantaneously, and said, WHAT IS THIS YOU HAVE GIVEN ME?---HERE---TAKE YOUR GERMAN ALMANACK. At last, they offered him that of Bern, which he examined in the darkest corner of an alcove. We heard him turning over the leaves, repeating the number 24, and immediately after 34. On returning to his place, with the almanack opened at the month of December, he placed it on the table, and filled up the blank he had left with 24. This passed on the 23d, but as he believed it to be the 24th, we can hardly say he was mistaken (e.)

Expla-

(e.) Mr N——'s relation.

Explanation of some of the foregoing Facts.

IN order to throw some light upon the last mentioned facts, it will be necessary to point to two general observations, which result from what has been advanced concerning the sleep-walker's senses and visions.

FIRST OBSERVATION. *That, to perceive an object, he is obliged to open his eyes a little; but that the first impression, however rapid, is strong enough to supersede a second exertion of the organ; or, in other words, that the object is as distinctly present to his imagination as if he really saw it.*

SECOND OBSERVATION. *That his imagination, once heated, paints objects which he knows, and those which he figures to exist, in the same vivid manner, as if he saw them in reality. That, in fine, all his senses, under the guidance of his imagination, seem to be concentrated in the object with which his imagination is struck; and, whilst it continues to be struck, are open to no perceptions, which have not a reference to that object.*

THE union of these two causes seems adequate to explain the most singular facts we have stated, such as Devaud writing with his eyes shut, and when the light is intercepted. The paper, each character, and its precise place, are clearly and distinctly painted on his imagination. His hand, then, which follows the dictates of his imagination, will obviously put down on the *real*, each character in the same place it occupies on the *ideal*, paper. In this way he may pen letters, sentences, or whole pages. The circumstance noticed in the Encyclopedie, under the article *Somnambulisme*, confirms this idea: for the sleep-walker, whose case is there related, was deceived by a blank leaf of paper of the same size with that on which he had written part of a discourse, and which, they had, without his knowledge, substituted in its place. He made the same corrections on that he meant to have done on the written one, and upon lines exactly corresponding.

SINCE the sleep-walker can write with any thing placed before his eyes, we are not to be surprized that he should do so in the greatest

est obscurity. But should it be asked, how can he perceive his paper, or distinguish the traits of his pen?---we answer, that in the case of a light being by him, he sees the objects to which his imagination draws him; and, consequently, by lifting up his eye-lids, sees the paper, and afterwards retains the impression, though his eyes should be quite shut. In darkness, it seems, that his sense of touch, supplies in some measure that of sight; that his hands, and even his face (for he has been seen to approach objects so near his face as to touch it) help him out with a just idea of the forms and qualities of objects, and that his imagination does the rest. By the help of light, he can, from time to time, assure himself that he really forms letters. In the dark, he is most likely guided by the regular and mechanical habit of resorting every now and then to the ink-glass; and, perhaps, by the difference of noise between a wet and dry pen, as well as by the greater or less facility of its running along. For it is evident, that all his senses are absorbed in the object that occupies him. We ought also to remark, that the actions of sleep-walkers in the dark, have not as

yet undergone such a strict investigation, as to make us affirm, that their pen always, and punctually, executes its office.

IN like manner, we may conceive how Devaud, by the aid of that lively and durable impression made upon the imagination, sees the verses of a psalm or plates, tho' covered with paper: how he can read in the dark the title of a book which he has seen, since it is as accurately imprinted upon his imagination as if he saw it with his eyes: how, in short, he can walk with steadiness and confidence in a place deprived of light. Somnambulism is to him what experience is to a blind man. In an unknown, but light place, he avoids obstacles by the sight. But it is remarked, that he never opens his eyes, till he be very near the objects; a circumstance which would lead us to believe, that he is made sensible of their presence by their transpiration (*f*), or by some emanation or other, which affects the sense of touch or smell. To this we may add, that the

(*f*) We have seen above, that the presence of several persons affected him disagreeably.

the air, agitated by his hasty walk, and returned from the obstacles it encounters, ought naturally to give him warning. Hence the reason, perhaps, why he removes all at once from bodies in his way, when just on the point of stumbling upon them. These different sensations, not less prompt or rapid than perception by sight, but which operate not at such a distance, are, no doubt, of use in dark and unknown paths. Their effect, too, ought to be the more marked, that every power of sense, as we have hinted above, is most probably absorbed in the object which he studies to contemplate (g.) Perhaps, all these helps united, may appear insufficient. But let it be remembered, that we are not in possession of exact observations upon the patient's manner of walking in places deprived of light, and with which he is unacquainted. It is even reasonable to suppose, that his motions are then more uncertain.

PRO-

(g) The boy, we have observed, most commonly walks with his head inclined to the earth ; an attitude perhaps the most favourable for receiving the impressions of corporeal objects.

PROVIDED our general observations, which are the result of facts, be distinctly kept in mind, (we mean the vivid impression of objects, justness of the sense of touch, and capability of occasional sight) we need not further extend our explications ; nor will it any longer be difficult to account for the several facts we have specified. The 36th alone seems to baffle our comprehension. But it stands single, and cannot, we presume, warrant the inference, that *the sleep-walker is capable of discerning in the dark, objects which never before fell under his observation.* For, 1st, Such an inference is contrary to the false vision reported in fact 33d. 2^{dly}, The date put down might be the effect of chance. 3^{dly}, Though the night was very dark, the candle which was in the room might suffice for such susceptible organs as his certainly are. The experiment, therefore, would require to be repeated.

THE above explanations lessen not the singularity of the sleep-walker's actions ; but they strip them of the wonderful, and so advance

vance us a step in the path of truth *: for, from the moment that the torch of experience illuminates the ways of reason, the marvellous disappears. It may still be proper, however, to subjoin the following observations; whether they shall be found to confirm or invalidate what we have advanced. They who would apply to this sort of disquisition, would do well to repeat them frequently, and prosecute their enquiries with the minute diligence of circumstantial detail. For then alone, can we hope to develope the causes of appearances.

1st, To repeat our observations on different sleep-walkers.

2dly,

* This poor sentence is condemned, yet, perhaps, unjustly, to drag a tail. The *for* is not altogether apposite; and, besides, ushers in an assertion, surfeited with truth, and announced with pomposness. With all deference to the academicians of Lausanne, the translator must beg leave to remark, that this memoir, the subject of which seemed to call for the language of plainness and perspicuity, assumes, in certain passages, a rounded, stately air, which had better suited the weighty and important debates of an Helvetic diet.

2dly, To ascertain, repeatedly, if they can read, in the dark, books which they have not formerly seen.

3dly, To learn, if in the same situation, they can distinguish the hour by a watch.

4thly, WHEN they write, to remove the inkhorn gently and without the least noise; and observe, if, in seeking a new supply of ink, they bring not the pen to the precise spot they did before:

5thly, To observe if their steps be as assured in a dark and strange place, as in one that is familiar to them.

IN all these experiments, we would recommend darkness, since hitherto the eyes of sleep-walkers have been thought to serve them in no stead.

General Reflections on Somnambulism.

THAT we may present, in one connected view, the result of all our observations upon young

young Devaud's affection, we shall throw them together into the following reflections or queries.

1st, On the supposition that sleep is a state of rest, superinduced by a general relaxation of the bodily members, a suspension, in short, of all the functions of our senses, are we to consider somnambulism as a state of sleep, since we see those who are affected with it, speak, walk, write, answer questions, act, in a word, agreeably to the impulse of their imagination, and the objects on which it is exercised?

2dly, If somnambulism be not sleep, how happens it, that natural sleep-walkers are affected only in their sleep; and that, without previously falling back into sleep, they cannot safely emerge into their waking state, or recall the natural calm of their senses?

3dly, LET us put the following case. A person has had his nervous system deranged by a violent blow on the head; is seized with fits, during which he imagines he acts as

G

when

when in health ; is hurried on by his imagination, which bounces from object to object, and stamps his words and actions with extravagance ; and is afterwards totally unconscious of what passed— is not the case of such a person a true accidental somnambulism ?— Again, is not insanity a real, but more prolonged, sleep-walking ?— or, *vice versa*, is not sleep-walking temporary insanity * ?

4thly, Do not Devaud's sensibility and irritability of nerves, evinced by the electrical and magnetic experiments, and by the prolongation of the fit in the manner above described, seem to indicate, that the cause of the affection is seated in the nervous system ?

5thly,

* This passage suggests a curious fact. Father Mabillon, when a young man, was a dunce of the first magnitude. At the age of twenty-six, he fell upon a stone stair, and fractured his skull. He was immediately trepanned ; and was ever after remarked for a luminous understanding, a prodigious memory, and an ardent zeal for study. Let physical and metaphysical system-mongers, says Mercier, account for this.

5tly, DOES not the case of a man, who is so deeply plunged in some abstruse speculation, as not to see or hear what passes around him, much resemble that of the sleep-walker, whose eyes, ears, and sense of touch are wholly engrossed by the object which happens to strike his imagination ?

6thly, SINCE the sleep-walker sees only what he wishes to see, may we not conceive, that, with his eyes open, he shall not perceive the surrounding objects, whilst he shall discern those with which his imagination is busied, as distinctly as if he actually saw them before him ; and that, of consequence, he may, with his eyes open, see phantoms, and yet not distinguish real objects ?

7thly, MAY not somnambulism be thus described ? It is a nervous affection which seizes and quits us during our sleep. Whilst this affection lasts, the imagination presents objects, which struck it in our waking state, in the same forcible manner as when they were present to the senses ; yet is itself affected by no objects, which happen at the time to be

within the sphere of our senses, except such of them as may be accidentally connected with the reigning dream. If, during this state, the imagination has no particular bias, we receive the impressions made by objects, as when awake, provided only we be excited to regard them. This perception is very accurate, insomuch, that once received, the imagination recalls it at pleasure with the same justness as the senses themselves. Lastly, impressions received in a fit of somnambulism, entirely vanish with the close of sleep, and return not till we are again affected.

8thly, ARE not magnetic and natural sleep-walking the same?—In answer to this query, we subjoin the following section.

Magnetic and natural Somnambulism compared.

AFTER the report of the commissioners of the academy of sciences*, may we still presume to draw the attention of a learned body to the pretended agent, magnetism?—Should we not rather class it among those reveries, which none but the desperate patient, who clings to quacks,

* At Paris.

quacks, as the sinking wretch to the feeble reed, ever listens to ?

NEITHER mean we to speak of any new fluid. For when we mention *animal magnetism*, we would be understood to confine ourselves to the *imagination* and *touches*, the effects of which have been so ably demonstrated and explained by the gentlemen of the academy. Among these effects, however, that denominated *magnetic somnambulism*, as it was then unknown, escaped their observation. It were foreign to our purpose to prove the existence of such a state of the human frame. But taking that for granted, we affirm, that it is produced by means of the imagination, and certain gentle and repeated touches upon the *plexus* of the nerves ; but only in the case of weak, sickly, and especially, female constitutions (b.) Viewed in this light, magnetic sleep-walking, is, doubtless, an interesting subject

(b) Why, it may be said, did not the commissioners, who followed a similar process, not discover this state ?--- We answer, that the methods employed to excite somnambulism, are of a much gentler kind than those employed to produce a crisis ; which last was the aim of the

ject of observation to the naturalist and philosopher.

BUT before we compare it with natural somnambulism, we ought to strip it of every circumstance of exaggeration or falsehood, which imposition, credulity or interested views may have attached to it. We believe, for example, that magnetic sleep-walkers are commonly subject to their magnetizer, that they can speak, write, and act at his instigation or requisition; that they themselves can magnetise, by observing the necessary rules; that they perform this operation more easily upon some persons than upon others; and, that

when

commissioners. The having recourse to means too powerful, has been the very cause of so many vain attempts to excite sleep-walking. For this idea the world is indebted to one of our learned colleagues, (Dr. Verdeil) who has written a most interesting memoir upon animal magnetism. In this piece, he proves the reality of magnetic sleep-walking, unfolds its causes, and reduces it to its due estimate. Particular circumstances have prevented its publication; but we can safely assert, that its merit rests upon a great number of observations made with attention and care, as one of us followed them closely, and assisted in conducting them.

when awake, they entirely forget what passed in the course of the affection. But we reckon it a gross absurdity to suppose, that any magnetic sleep-walker, unskilled in medicine, should, in virtue of this affection, attain to the knowledge of diseases and their remedies, see through the human and other opaque bodies, hear by means of the pit of the stomach, obey the silent thought of his magnetizer, and such like extravagancies.

WE wished to have presented the Society with a set of comparative experiments with regard to these two sorts of sleep-walking ; but trust that the analogies furnished by the observations we have already brought forward, will suffice to convince every impartial enquirer that they are the same.

1st, MAGNETIC somnambulism is preceded by a disturbed and agitated sleep, marked by spontaneous muscular movements, starts and palpitations ; by every thing, in short, which characterizes Devaud's state of sleep.

2dly,

2dly, WE have already seen what effects the loadstone produced upon that young man. Magnetic sleep-walkers experience the like, though more or less marked, according to their constitutions. We have seen a young lady fall down in a nervous fit as often as a magnetized bar was placed under her nose.

3dly, THE natural sleep-walker is chiefly intent on objects, which, in his waking state, took fastest hold of his imagination ; and acts agreeably to the suggestions of that faculty. So the magnetic patient, who has dozed over, in the midst of the technical apparatus, whose imagination has been attracted by the flat tub, and a crowd of spectators, ranged in a circle, all waiting for the effects of the operator's gestures and contortions of feature, he himself, all the while, standing close by him, enveloped, as it were, in his manoeuvres, and pressed by his touchings, soon gives symptoms of his situation, by returning touch for touch, and gesture for gesture. Is it surprising, that he should brood over magnetism, when his imagination is constantly struck with it ?---If he chuse to perform upon some persons in preference to others,

others, so Devaud acts more readily with one person than with another. For the question is, to what are these learned words, *relation of fluids, relation of persons, mild fluid, &c.* ultimately reducible?

IN fact, we have seen a maid servant, in the state of magnetic sleep-walking, go thro' the duties of her station. And, without doubt, a magnetizer would be greatly at a stand to shew in what respects her case differed from that of a natural sleep-walker.

Afably, IT is indeed true, that the sleep-walker, who is rendered so by magnetism, obeys the operator alone, and hears and answers none but him. But this holds only after a certain space of time has elapsed: for we have seen patients, in the beginning of the fit, answer every body indifferently. Under pretence of confirming the affection, the performer takes them aside, he alone speaks to them; nor allows any other object to distract them, till, by degrees, they become so habituated to his person, his inclinations, and his voice, that they are his very humble ser-

vants. But, since Devaud answers his acquaintance, and those who accost him familiarly, more readily than others, should we doubt, that by training him in a similar way, and by drawing him off from every object that might lead his attention astray, he might be brought to submit to the will of one?

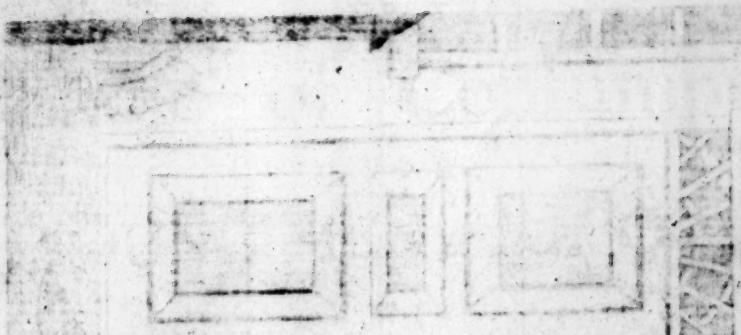
5thly, In the last place, magnetic and natural sleep-walkers are alike incapable of recalling, in the most distant manner, the actions they performed in the paroxysm.

MORE, surely, need not be added to prove that two dispositions of our frame, which are so analogous, and indicated by so many similar effects, are the same. If still the marvellous feats of magnetic sleep-walkers, and nothing else, are to be urged on the other side of the question, we leave to time the care of destroying them. Already the rage for animal magnetism begins to abate; and sober reflexion must soon banish every illusion of fancy, as morning dispels our dreams.

9 NO59

F. I. N. I. S.

59



卷之三

